

“Words Matter 1”

SUNDAY, JUNE 1, 2025 - MICHAEL BOWERS



Summary - “Our Words Matter”

How many of us have ever said something we wish to take back immediately? Have you ever thought, “I can’t believe she/he just said that?” Or, perhaps you feel that there is never the time to really talk. Or, mid-discussion, someone says: “It’s not a big deal.” Or: You have a meaningful conversation that you need to have with a boss, your spouse, a child, a friend that might be more than a friend, and you have created, in your mind, how the conversation is going to go, yet, when you sit down with them, they are distant, disconnected, tired from a long day at work, or don’t wish to have the same conversation whatsoever. Then you become frustrated with them, and they with you. And nothing productive is said or done. The reality is that your expectations were not communicated, yet you still hold them to the results you have created in your mind. What we see in all of these situations, and many more, is that our words matter, they are significant, and they are powerful! This week, we will take a 30,000-foot view of our words and their impact. Then, over the next three weeks, we will look at specific passages that display the power of our words and how God’s word directs us to use those words.

Scripture -

As we take a dive into God’s word over the next four weeks, we must recognize the purpose of our words, the giver of our words, and the redeemer of words. Again, words matter, but what we see in scripture is that God spoke first. Before mankind was ever created, God spoke. His words brought all of life into existence, including that of mankind. After creating man and woman He spoke to them and did so in a way that they understood. This is incredible! As author Paul David Tripp puts it, “God, the sovereign Creator and Lord, spoke to Adam and Eve in words they could understand! Let the wonder of this grip you. The infinite and almighty One makes himself knowable and understandable through human language! From the moment of creation, God is not distant. He is not hiding in silence. He comes near and uses words to reveal Himself and explain everything else. God is not just a God who does, He is a God who speaks powerfully, elaborately, consistently, comprehensively, and clearly—to his people. His words mark each phase of His work. He does not leave His people without a witness.” In addition to this, God also speaks to His people through His word, through scripture. Again, He is not distant! Furthermore, we as people speak. Words drive our everyday conversations and how we use these words reflect the condition of our heart. On top of all this, we also see that Satan speaks and is ready and willing to manipulate God’s words and our own. Because of this we must turn to the True Word - Jesus Christ - and the truths that are found in scripture which God uses to transform our hearts and our words. As we learn more and more to walk in His grace, love, truth, mercy, and redemption we will more clearly recognize the words that can lead to lies, blame, shame, harm, and which so quickly can become weapons of war instead of a means to deliver hope, peace, and grace. May we as individual believers, and as a church body, seek God’s power, grace, truth, and love to use our words in a way that cares well for others and ultimately glorifies our Creator and Lord.

Key Apps, Websites, and Online Tools for Further Study

- <https://www.blueletterbible.org/>
- <https://www.biblegateway.com/>
- <https://biblehub.com/>
- <https://www.youversion.com/>
- <https://www.bibleref.com/>
- <https://bible.org/>
- <https://netbible.org/>
- <https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/>
- <https://www.desiringgod.org/>
- <https://www.gty.org/>
- <https://www.gotquestions.org/>
- <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/>
- <https://carm.org/>
- <https://dwellapp.io/>

Further Scripture Study

Genesis 1:1-5, 28, 3:1-13; Proverbs 4:23, 12:18, 16:24; Matthew 12:33-37; 2 Corinthians 16:9-10; James 3:1-12, 4:1

As you study the scripture verses provided for this week, study for right context and right questions...

Right Context:

- The verse itself and key word(s) that stand out in the verse (meanings)
- The verses around the verse, the section of scripture, the chapter, the book, old/new testament, and relation to the rest of scripture
- Author and Date (Who wrote the book and when?)
- Audience (Who is the book written to? Main characters in the story and/or text?)
- Main points and overall purpose of the book
- Historical background, cultural significance, setting, people, rulers, etc.
- Scripture references; let scripture interpret scripture as much as possible

Right Questions:

- What does this passage say?
- What does this passage mean to its original audience?
- What is this passage teaching me about God?
- What does this passage tell us about man?
- What does this passage demand of me? (Is there a command to obey? Is there a promise to claim? Is there a sin to avoid? How is this applicable to me?)
- How does this passage change the way I relate to people? (What actions must I take in response to this passage?)
- What does this passage prompt me to pray? (For God, for others, for my community, for family, etc.)

Key Thoughts

We must recognize the purpose of our words, the giver of our words, and the redeemer of words.

God Spoke First - Genesis 1:1-5, 28

Sixteen times in Genesis chapter one, God speaks, or calls (proclaims) creation into existence. God reveals His plan to Adam and Eve by speaking directly to them.

Then, if that is not enough, God's word continues to be spoken, recorded, and available in what we have as scripture, the Bible. A complete collection of words penned by men, breathed by God over 1500 years, and written by multiple authors.

God's word sets guardrails for us to live within, which deliver freedom. God's word speaks to life, but it also speaks to our death. It gives direction, and most importantly, communicates the hope of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Since God spoke first, our words belong to the LORD. God spoke. God used words first. God has a purpose and plan spoken into existence. Words matter.

People Speak - Genesis 1:26-31, 2:23, 3:1-13

God gave mankind, male and female, the ability to communicate, talk, and use words. They were created in dominion (rule) over all of creation, and they can talk to each other and share thoughts, hopes, and desires.

Scripture says, "Then God said, let us make man in our image, after our likeness." God spoke, and if created in the image of God, then mankind would be able to talk and use words. Simple enough. Since God gave us the ability to talk, our words should bring honor and glory to Him.

At this point, when mankind was first created, communication was not flawed or sinful. Adam and Eve would have spoken without malice, selfish intention, condemnation, yelling, or blame until the fall. Words would not be misconstrued, intentions would be pure, and speech would be to uplift, encourage, and bring honor. That was communication in a world not marred by sin or the work of the enemy.

God speaks. People Speak. But, so does the enemy.

Key Thoughts

Satan Speaks - Genesis 3:1-13

And this is where the battle for our words becomes a war. Do you see the lie? The twisting of the truth? It is a spoken lie from Satan to Eve. The authority of God is challenged through the words, "Did God really say?"

There for the first time. The authority of God was questioned. The command of God was doubted. The father of lies poked his head into the moment, and the seeds of a lie were planted for the first time.

Satan introduces a lie. He is not confused when he is asking the question. Satan speaks. Satan lies. Relationships are damaged. They sin. They recognize their condition and need to cover up what was once pure. They hide. And the blame game begins. God asks Adam, "How?" Adam blames Eve. Eve blames the serpent.

Notice that Adam does not stand up for Eve and say, "I stood back and watched, and she and I are one. It's my fault." Eve didn't own up to her sin; she blamed someone else. We do this all the time.

In this moment, the words that Adam and Eve speak reflect the serpent, instead of the Creator. They tell lies instead of the truth. They blame instead of repent. And we do the same. Instead of claiming our impatience, desire for control, and desire to be correct, we blame. We shift. But words matter. And words, since this moment, have been a battle for each of us.

God's word continues to speak about our words - James 3:1-12 and Proverbs 12:18, 16:24

James acknowledges what we all know: we stumble in the category, the action, and the speaking of our words. All of us do. But remember, James is leading us to maturity as we "hold the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ." Don't push off the warnings of taming your tongue, but embrace them. Don't dread his warnings, his guidance, but run to them. He is not simply trying to say control it; he is saying recognize the power of your words. When we realize the power of our words, then maybe we will seek ways to change them, shift them, and allow God's grace to be poured out over our hearts.

James compares the power and impact of our words/the tongue to three items:

- A bit - in the mouth of a horse allows a rider to control a 1200 pound brute
- A small rudder - Ships have grown larger & heavier, but still proportionately, they still have their course determined by a comparatively small slab of metal called a rudder.
- A little fire - A tiny spark holds the power to destroy thousands of acres of forest. Such is the power of the tongue. Held in check such power for great good. Out of control, what havoc it can cause.

Key Thoughts

Words matter! Sticks and stones break bones. But words pierce to the heart, or they bring healing. Words can bring healing to a relationship or separate it. Words reveal our trust in the authority of God's calling upon our lives or our disobedience. Words take ownership of our tempers, impatience, or we blame someone else.

If we claim to be Christ's followers, surrendering all to Jesus, then the fruit or damage we create with our words can lead people toward a relationship with Jesus Christ or send them packing, moving as far away from the Christian faith as possible.

As God transforms our hearts, God transforms our words. - Matthew 12:33-37; James 4:1

We must guard our hearts if we desire to guard and guide our words. Our words are connected directly to our hearts. (James 4:1; Proverbs 4:23)

Our words are rooted in the condition of the spiritual soil of your heart. (Matthew 12:33-37)

- Spew hatred - the heart has unresolved anger
- Spew words lacking trust - it might be decisions are being made with your heart that create mistrust in all relationships
- Spew gossip - pride is churning, bitterness is brewing
- Spew profanity and harmful words - the soil is being prepared with filth rather than things of faith.
- If our words are filled with lies, we must examine why and what hurt or pain leads us to hide behind falsehood.
- When we question authority with our words, we must ask whether we have surrendered to the authority of a Holy God through the grace and forgiveness given through Jesus Christ.
- We must return to the roots of temptation and commit to seeking forgiveness.
- Where we have caused pain, we must prayerfully seek ways to display mercy over judgment.

To combat our words, we must surrender our hearts. Words matter. They build up, or they tear down.

Confessing the lies, the blame, and our harmful words will be met by God's grace and mercy - 2 Corinthians 16:9-10

Confession to God: "God, these passages expose my blame. I have often forgotten that my words belong to you. I have claimed my words as my own. I have lied. I have blamed. I have spoken with the heart of the deceiver rather than the redeemer. I ask for your forgiveness and your help. You alone can save. You alone can transform my heart. You alone can deliver my words." ~ Tripp



Key Thoughts

Confession to those who have wronged: "As my _____, I ask you to forgive me when I have falsely blamed you. I am asking God to transform my heart and words, and I pray that God will restore, mend, or bring complete healing to our relationship. This will not be my last time to confess and seek repentance, but I will strive to be obedient to his desires, actions, and words in the future.

Everyone of us has harmed someone with our words, but we also have the opportunity to confess our sins and desires and surrender them to Christ, asking for His forgiveness as well as forgiveness from others. In this we rest in the fact that His grace is enough.

Words matter. God spoke. Mankind spoke. Satan spoke and deceived. Words became weapons of war instead of a means to deliver hope, peace, and grace. May we seek God's power to change that in our lives and the lives of others.

Reflect & Respond

Can you share a time in your life where the words that someone spoke to you either built you up or tore you down? What was the result and what made the words matter so much?

Words matter! As you look at your life and your relationships, do your words do more to build up or to tear down? What impact are you having positively or negatively on the ones you love most (spouse, children, friends, co-workers, neighbors, etc.)?

As you read through Genesis 1-3, do you see all of the words at work? Do you see that God spoke first, gave us the ability to speak with Him and understand, and that the enemy was also at work in this to kill, steal, and destroy God's truth and mankind's future? How does this scenario continue to play itself out in your day to day life?

If we claim to be Christ's followers, surrendering all to Jesus, then the fruit or damage we create with our words can lead people toward a relationship with Jesus Christ or send them packing, moving as far away from the Christian faith as possible. What are your words doing? Where are they directing you and others? What are they producing? (James 3:1-12; Proverbs 12:18, 16:24; Matthew 12:33-37)

Read 2 Corinthians 16:9-10 and also dwell on the other passages from our study this week. Allow the Holy Spirit to search your heart and bring conviction where needed. What do you need to confess to God and/or to another regarding your words/actions? As you do so rest in the fact that Christ says, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Watch what happens in your life when you yield to Him and His plan for your life in this area over your own.